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Agenda item 134

Programme budget for the biennium 2016-2017**Revised estimates relating to the programme budget for
the biennium 2016-2017 under sections 27, Humanitarian
assistance, and 36, Staff assessment****United Nations Monitoring Mechanism for the Syrian Arab Republic****Report of the Secretary-General***Summary*

The Security Council, by resolution 2332 (2016), extended the mandate of the United Nations Monitoring Mechanism for the Syrian Arab Republic established under resolution 2165 (2014) for a period of 12 months until 10 January 2018.

The present report contains the resource requirements for the period from 11 January to 31 December 2017 in the amount of \$3,890,000 net (\$4,221,300 gross). Taking into account the unencumbered balance of \$1,173,600 net (\$1,252,600 gross) against the approved resources for the Monitoring Mechanism for 2016, additional requirements are requested under the programme budget for the biennium 2016-2017 in the amount of \$2,716,400 net (\$2,968,700 gross).

The General Assembly is requested to approve the proposed resources for the Monitoring Mechanism for the period from 11 January to 31 December 2017 and to appropriate, after taking into account the estimated underexpenditure in 2016, \$2,716,400 under 27, Humanitarian assistance, and \$252,300 under section 36, Staff assessment, to be offset by a corresponding amount under income section 1, Income from staff assessment.



I. United Nations Monitoring Mechanism for the Syrian Arab Republic

Background

1. Six years into the conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic, the humanitarian situation continues to deteriorate. More than half the country's population has fled, 4.8 million people have sought refuge in the region and beyond and 6.3 million are internally displaced. Millions of people have fallen into poverty, resulting in negative coping mechanisms and increasing protection risks. As a result, 13.5 million people are in need of some form of humanitarian assistance, out of whom more than 640,000 live in besieged areas and nearly 4 million in hard-to-reach areas. In 2017, with no immediate end to the conflict in sight, humanitarian needs are expected to continue to grow in scale, severity and complexity.

2. As 2016 has shown, the delivery of humanitarian assistance within the Syrian Arab Republic remains extremely challenging and has become increasingly dangerous as a result of active fighting, shifting conflict lines and disrespect for international humanitarian law. At the same time, administrative hurdles continue to hamper the delivery of humanitarian assistance to people in need, especially in besieged and hard-to-reach areas.

3. In its resolution 2165 (2014), the Security Council authorized the United Nations humanitarian agencies and their implementing partners to use the Syrian border crossings of Bab al-Salam and Bab al-Hawa with Turkey, Al Yarubiyah with Iraq and Al-Ramtha with Jordan, in addition to those already in use, in order to ensure that humanitarian assistance, including medical and surgical supplies, reaches people in need throughout the Syrian Arab Republic through the most direct routes, with notification to the Syrian authorities. It also established the United Nations Monitoring Mechanism for the Syrian Arab Republic. The Council subsequently extended the mandate of the Monitoring Mechanism, first by resolution 2191 (2014), then by resolution 2258 (2015) and, most recently, by resolution 2332 (2016), which extended the mandate until 10 January 2018.

4. To date, one monitoring team is in place in Turkey that is operating at the Bab al-Salam and Bab al-Hawa border crossings and one in Jordan for the Al-Ramtha border crossing. In Iraq, owing to a precarious security situation around the Al Yarubiyah crossing, United Nations humanitarian agencies have not been able to implement cross-border humanitarian operations for the Syrian Arab Republic. While the Monitoring Mechanism has yet to establish a presence, it has prepositioned equipment and identified surge staff support so that it could deploy quickly, should the situation improve.

5. As at 31 December 2016, a total of 467 shipments or 12,093 trucks had crossed the border into the Syrian Arab Republic under the terms of resolutions 2165 (2014), 2191 (2014) and 2258 (2015), including 9,701 trucks from Turkey and 2,392 from Jordan since July 2014. The Monitoring Mechanism has successfully monitored and confirmed the humanitarian nature of all consignments without incident or complaints from any party.

6. The United Nations cross-border deliveries have increased steadily since the adoption of resolution 2165 (2014) in July 2014. By December 2014, 624 trucks had

crossed the border into the Syrian Arab Republic. That number rose to 4,882 in 2015 and to 6,587, a 35 per cent increase, in 2016. The Monitoring Mechanism has played an important role in supporting advocacy for cross-border humanitarian operations and securing support from stakeholders.

7. As at 31 December 2016, the United Nations cross-border operations supported by the Monitoring Mechanism had reached millions of people throughout the Syrian Arab Republic, including food assistance for 3 million people, many on a monthly basis, non-food items for 3.2 million people, water and sanitation supplies for 2.8 million people, and medical and health supplies sufficient for 11 million treatments, including vaccinations for more than 2 million people.

8. The Monitoring Mechanism has continued to strive to improve its monitoring and address emerging challenges. It uses appropriate technology, such as metal detectors, high-security seals and other devices, depending on the requirements of each consignment. It collaborates with the customs authorities at the border-crossing points to enhance the inspection of trucks, such as through the use of X-ray devices. After each operation, the monitoring teams in Jordan and Turkey meet to discuss lessons learned and improvements to the monitoring standard operating procedures.

9. The Monitoring Mechanism maintains links with all relevant partners, including the Governments of host countries, local authorities, United Nations agencies and their implementing partner organizations, the Syrian Arab Republic and members of the Security Council to provide updates on its work and ensure support for monitoring activities. Excellent working relations with all stakeholders have helped to garner support, including from host Governments, for United Nations cross-border humanitarian operations and the work of the Mechanism.

10. The Monitoring Mechanism participates in relevant coordination forums as part of its commitment to contributing to the facilitation of overall humanitarian efforts in the Syrian Arab Republic. Such forums include the humanitarian liaison group in Turkey, the cross-border task force in Jordan and relevant sector working groups, as well as the strategic steering group and the humanitarian task force of the International Syria Support Group, whenever required.

11. The staffing structure of the Monitoring Mechanism has included a total of 43 positions for international and national personnel and United Nations Volunteers. This complement of staffing has provided optimal operational capacity to deliver the mandate. As at 31 December 2016, 31 positions were encumbered, representing a vacancy rate of 28 per cent. Of the 12 vacant positions, 8 are to be based in Iraq, from where the United Nations cross-border operations have not yet begun owing to the prevailing security situation. It is assumed, however, that the border crossing at Al Yarubiyah with Iraq, which is one of the crossing points as determined by the Security Council, would be established as soon as the security situation allows.

12. Some 80 per cent of the United Nations cross-border operations are carried out from Turkey and 20 per cent from Jordan. The redeployment of the Office of the Chief of the Monitoring Mechanism from Amman to Gaziantep, Turkey, is therefore proposed in order to bring it closer to the larger theatre of operations and to where coordination and policy discussions on cross-border assistance are most active. The transfer is expected to occur in April 2017, pending approval of the current proposals.

13. The transfer of the Office of the Chief of the Monitoring Mechanism would result in the relocation of three international positions of Chief (D-1), Administrative Officer (P-3) and Special Assistant to the Chief (P-2) from Amman to Gaziantep. The transfer of the Office would also introduce the following changes in the staffing structure in Turkey: (a) the position of Team Leader (P-5) would be abolished, given that management oversight would come from the Chief and the team leadership function would be placed with the Monitoring Officer (P-4); (b) one position of Monitoring Officer (P-3) is proposed to ensure adequate monitoring capacity; (c) the position of Executive Assistant (LL) would be abolished, given that it would become redundant once the Special Assistant (P-2) is based in Gaziantep; and (d) an additional position of Driver (LL) is proposed in order to support the Office.

14. Following an internal review of the structure of the Monitoring Mechanism, the abolishment of the position of Information and Communications Technology Assistant (LL) in Amman is proposed, given that it was found more efficient to source information and communications technology support from the local offices of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in Amman and Gaziantep. As a result of the above-mentioned changes, the staffing structure of the Mechanism would include a total of 42 positions in 2017.

15. Throughout 2016, the Monitoring Mechanism strengthened its administrative and financial management capacities through the use of Umoja. Doing so has led to a reduced dependence on the services of the United Nations Development Programme.

II. Relationship of the activities to the biennial programme plan and programme of work for the biennium 2016-2017

16. The activities of the Monitoring Mechanism relate to programme 23, Humanitarian assistance, of the biennial programme plan (A/69/6 (Prog. 23)). They also relate to section 27, Humanitarian assistance, of the programme budget for the biennium 2016-2017 (A/70/6 (Sect. 27)).

17. The objective, expected accomplishments, indicators of achievement and performance measures are set out in table 1.

Table 1

Objective, expected accomplishments, indicators of achievement and performance measures

Objective: To ensure that humanitarian assistance reaches people in need throughout the Syrian Arab Republic through the most direct route.

Expected accomplishments	Indicators of achievement		Performance measures		
			2017	2016	2015
(a) Increase in the number of humanitarian trucks crossing the border	(a) Increased number of consignment crossing to the Syrian Arab Republic through the border crossing of Bab al-Salam, Bab al-Hawa, Al Yarubiyah and Al-Ramtha	Target	250	250	
		Estimate		220	188
		Actual		227	188
(b) Increase in the amount of humanitarian aid reaching people in need throughout the Syrian Arab Republic	(b) Increased number of United Nations and partner agencies delivering aid through the cross-border operations to people in need in the Syrian Arab Republic	Target	20	10	
		Estimate		15	7
		Actual		15	7

Outputs

- Trucks screened in accordance with the Mechanism's verification procedures and the Standard Operating Procedures (6,500)
- Reviews of the Mechanism's verification procedures and the Standard Operating Procedures (2)
- Notifications to the Syrian authorities for consignments crossing the border (250)
- Planning meetings with local authorities and the humanitarian community (50)
- Advocacy-focused meetings with local authorities and the humanitarian community to improve trans-shipment and monitoring procedures (6)

External factors

18. The Monitoring Mechanism is expected to achieve its objective and expected accomplishments on the assumption that: (a) authorities of relevant neighbouring countries will continue to provide the support necessary to implement the mandate of the Mechanism and ensure the safety and security of its personnel; (b) United Nations agencies and their implementing partners will carry out cross-border operations at least at the same level as in 2016; and (c) the borders remain open.

III. Estimated additional resource requirements for the biennium 2016-2017

19. Additional resource requirements for the proposals described above amount to \$3,890,000 (net of staff assessment) and are summarized in table 2.

Table 2
Additional resource requirements by object of expenditures

(Thousands of United States dollars)

Object of expenditure	Revised appropriation for the Mechanism (11 January 2016-10 January 2017)	Estimated expenditures	Variance (Under-/Over-) expenditure	Additional requirements for the Mechanism (11 January-31 December 2017)	Net additional requirements for 2017	2016-2017 revised estimate
	(1)	(2)	(3)=(1)-(2)	(4)	(5)=(4)-(3)	(6)=(2)+(4)
Other staff costs	3 200.4	2 475.9	724.5	3 068.9	2 344.4	5 544.8
Consultants	12.4	-	12.4	9.1	(3.3)	9.1
Travel of staff	297.8	297.8	-	297.8	297.8	595.6
Contractual services	69.2	28.7	40.5	18.6	(21.9)	47.3
General operating expenses	477.9	316.1	161.8	337.1	175.3	653.2
Hospitality	4.0	-	4.0	1.0	(3.0)	1.0
Supplies and materials	104.9	42.2	62.7	44.6	(18.1)	86.8
Furniture and equipment	94.3	22.6	71.7	51.0	(20.7)	73.6
Grants and contributions	153.1	57.1	96.0	61.9	(34.1)	119.0
Total (net)	4 414.0	3 240.4	1 173.6	3 890.0	2 716.4	7 130.4
Staff assessment	349.2	270.2	79.0	331.3	252.3	601.5
Total (gross)	4 763.2	3 510.6	1 252.6	4 221.3	2 968.7	7 731.9

Table 3
Positions

	Professional and higher categories								General Service and related category		National staff			United Nations Volunteers	Total
	USG	ASG	D-2	D-1	P-5	P-4	P-3	P-2	Total	Field/Security Service	General Service	Total international	National Officer	Local level	
Approved 2016	-	-	-	1	2	4	4	3	14	-	-	-	5	15	9 43
Proposed 2017	-	-	-	1	1	4	5	3	14	-	-	-	5	14	9 42
Change	-	-	-	-	(1)	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	(1)	- (1)

20. Currently, there are 43 positions approved for the Monitoring Mechanism. The changes proposed in the number and level of positions include an overall reduction of one position, including the proposed abolition of one P-5 position of Team Leader in Gaziantep and two local level positions (one Information and Communications Technology Assistant in Amman and one Executive Assistant in Gaziantep), and the proposed creation of one P-3 position of Monitoring Officer and one local level position of driver, both in Gaziantep (see table 3).

21. The estimated requirements of the Monitoring Mechanism for the period from 11 January to 31 December 2017 amount to \$3,890,000 net (\$4,221,300 gross) and

would provide for salaries and common staff costs for 42 positions (1 D-1, 1 P-5, 4 P-4, 5 P-3, 3 P-2, 5 national officers, 14 local level staff and 9 United Nations Volunteers (\$3,068,900)) and for operational requirements, including consultants (\$9,100), travel of staff (\$297,800), contractual services (\$18,600), general operating expenses (\$337,100), hospitality (\$1,000), supplies and materials (\$44,600), furniture and equipment (\$51,000) and grants and contributions (\$61,900).

22. The requirements of the Monitoring Mechanism for the portion of the current mandate period that falls in 2018 would be included in the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2018-2019.

23. No extrabudgetary resources are projected for the Monitoring Mechanism.

IV. Conclusions and recommendations

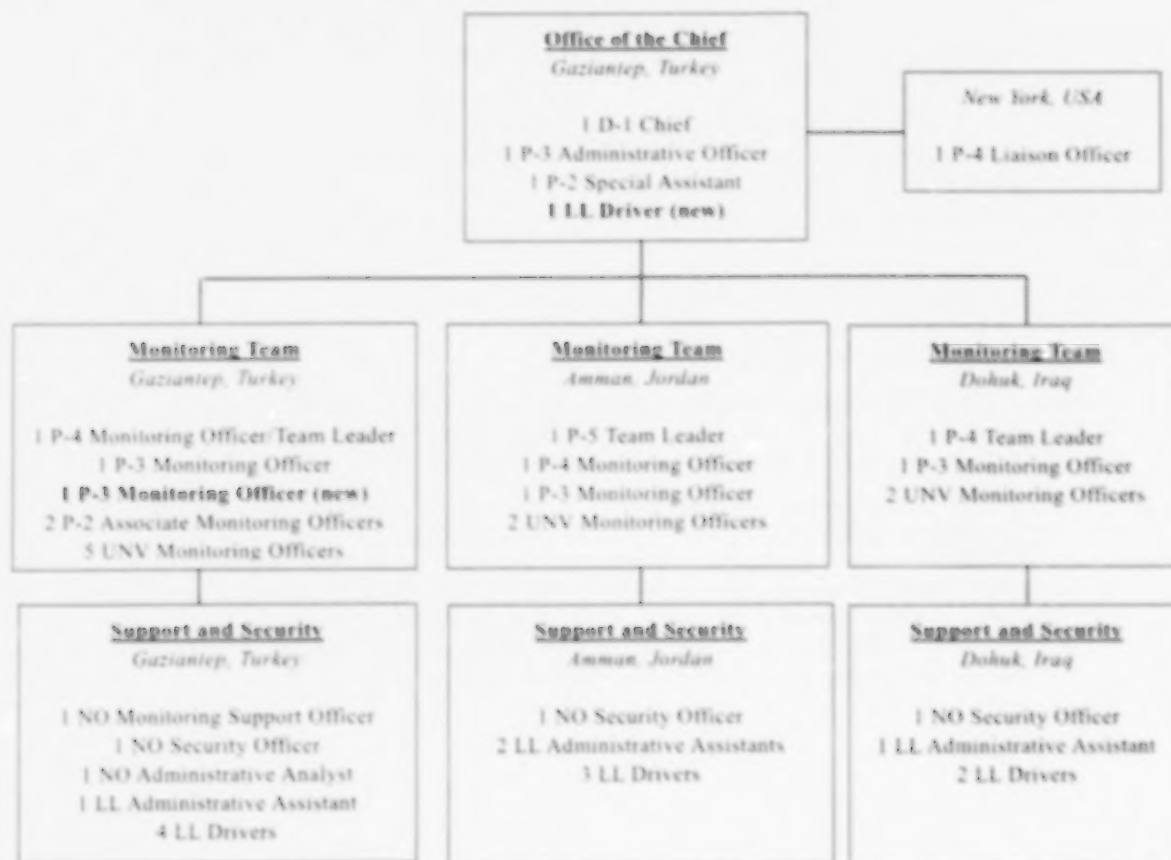
24. **The General Assembly is requested to:**

(a) Approve the proposed resources for the United Nations Monitoring Mechanism in the Syrian Arab Republic for the period from 11 January to 31 December 2017 in the amount of \$3,890,000 net (\$4,221,300 gross);

(b) Appropriate an additional amount of \$2,716,400 (net of staff assessment) under section 27, Humanitarian assistance, of the programme budget for the biennium 2016-2017, and an additional amount of \$252,300 under section 36, Staff assessment, to be offset by an equivalent amount under income section 1, Income from staff assessment, for the biennium 2016-2017. The amount of \$3,890,000 would represent a charge against the contingency fund for the biennium 2016-2017.

Annex

Organizational Structure



Abbreviations: D, Director; P, Professional; NO, national officer; LL, local level; UNV, United Nations Volunteers.